CITY OF PELICAN RAPIDS COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES-12-12-05

The City Council of the City of Pelican Rapids met in regular session on Monday, 12-12-05, at 5:30 p.m., Council Chambers, City Hall. Mayor Wayne Runningen, Council Members David Gottenborg, John E. Waller, III, Richard Peterson and Ben Woessner were present. No one was absent. Administrator Don Solga, Clerk-Treasurer Glenys Ehlert, Police Chief Scott Fox, Utilities Superintendent Brent E. Frazier and Street and Park Superintendent Brian Olson, Liquor Store Manager Bob Leslie, Library Director Pam Westby, Jerry Barney of the Pelican Rapids Press, and Jeanne Hovland were also present.

Mayor Runningen called the meeting to order.

No additions or deletions were made to the agenda.

Motion by Waller, seconded by Gottenborg to approve the minutes of 11-14-05 and 11-29-05 as presented. Motion passed unanimously.

Council reviewed the Accounts Payable Listing of 12-12-05.

Motion by Peterson, seconded by Waller to approve payment of the Accounts Payable Listing of 12-12-05 as presented. Motion includes approval of the Library Bill Listing of 12-06-05 as authorized by Library Board Member Gary Lage. Motion passed unanimously.

Police Chief Scott Fox presented his report. He reported on the Animal Control Task Force which has met a couple of times to review the City's ordinance especially regarding cats.

Utilities Superintendent Brent E. Frazier presented his report. Well No. 12 is off line at this time; it is being reconditioned. Last month the City purchased a used RBC to replace one at the wastewater facility from the City of Willmar. Council discussed the anaerobic ponds.

Street and Park Superintendent Brian Olson reported on activities in his department.

Jeanne Hovland, business owner on 9th Ave. SW, discussed the work that was done at Evenson Inc. approach from 9th Ave. SW, as part of Improvement Project No. 70. Engineer Paul King, of Moore Engineering and project engineer, authorized replacement of the cement that was there with asphalt. King says there should be no problems as the asphalt is to the same spec as the nine ton road. Hovland said that the property across the street had their driveway replaced with cement. "We just want it documented that if in five years, it breaks up, that it is not our responsibility," Hovland said. Mayor Runningen said assessments on the project will be collected for 15 years.

Motion by Woessner, seconded by Gottenborg to request a letter from Moore Engineering that the approach will not break up for the life of the road. Motion passed unanimously.

Jeanne Hovland discussed the cost of an on-sale liquor license, $1,500, compared to the cost of a Club License at $400. Council discussed the situation. Council Member Peterson said he thought the Council should try to help businesses and not look for a way to lock them down. Mayor Runningen asked if the Council wants to request information from surrounding communities. Council Member Gottenborg asked Clerk-Treasurer Glenys Ehlert to check on the minutes for council's action when on sale liquor was approved. Council Member Gottenborg said it comes down to if we think it is unfair to charge $400 for one license and $1,500 for the other. Council directed city staff to research minutes.

Hovland went on to discuss police enforcement and its effect on liquor establishments. Mayor Runningen and Police Chief Scott Fox discussed additional funding allocated to Otter Tail County to try to reduce the number of deaths due to alcohol related accidents. Police Chief Scott Fox said the deaths have been reduced and Otter Tail County is no longer classified for additional funds from the State of Minnesota.

Liquor Store Manager Bob Leslie reported that sales are up and inventory is down. Leslie presented a check to the City for $18,000 in addition to the $10,000 transferred earlier this year. Council discussed need for carpet improvement or contracting for mats in the liquor store. Mayor Runningen asked Leslie what he sees for the future. Leslie said he thinks the store has reached maximum potential for the space he has. He has reduced payroll costs. The only thing he could reduce is some wine inventory. Council Member Peterson asked about remote storage. "We're using 60% of the building for storage and we need to order volume for the discounts," Peterson said. "Storing off site would increase costs for renting space and labor for moving it," Leslie said. "Put it in a bigger building some place else and sell it from there," Peterson continued.

Library Director Pam Westby provided Council Members with the Library Long Range Plans – 2005-2009 and a booklet entitled, <u>Limited English Proficiency: An Assessment of Needs and Services in West Central Minnesota.</u> The Viking Library System developed the assessment and it will be used to help secure grants.

Administrator Don Solga reported on the Park Board meeting of 12-06-05. The Park Board is working on grants through the West Central Initiative Fund and Department of Natural Resources for the walking bridge and River Park. The Park Board met with the Library and Senior Citizens Center to discuss the plans for River Park. All groups agreed that parking is the most immediate need. Westby said in addition to parking, the other immediate problem is lighting.

Administrator Solga reported on the establishment of a required Safety Committee. Lakes Country Service Cooperative facilitated the first meeting as part of the City's contract for safety training.

Clerk-Treasurer Glenys Ehlert presented the 11-30-05 financial reports.

Ehlert reviewed the 2004 Seal Coat Project paid by monies invested from previous years and the Improvement Reserve Fund. Motion by Gottenborg, seconded by Waller to approve payment of $3369.97 for the 2004 Seal Coat Engineering bill from the Improvement Reserve Fund. Motion passed unanimously.

Council discussed the Sewer Fund budget deficit. Motion by Gottenborg, seconded by Peterson to transfer $140,000 from the WWTF Litigation Investment Account to the Sewer Fund checking account. Motion passed unanimously.

Clerk-Treasurer Glenys Ehlert reported that the Fire Department voted to increase the Fire Chief's Salary from $1200 to $1500 in January, 2005. Motion by Peterson, seconded by Waller to accept the Fire Department's recommendation and authorize an increase in the Fire Chief's Salary from $1200 to $1500 per year for 2005 and subsequent years. Motion passed unanimously.

Administrator Solga reviewed the proposed 2006 Budget. The Budget Committee met and reviewed the budget relative to the 2005 November year to date. They were able to hold the general fund levy increase to $9,985.42, a 2% increase. The budget reflects a substantial increase for Local Government Aid in 2006. Mayor Runningen said, "In light of the increase in LGA, we do not want to hit the tax payer with a huge levy increase."
Library Director Pam Westby commented, "When the LGA was cut in 2003, we were reduced by $10,000." "We were hoping to gain that back when LGA funding increased," she continued. Council Member Gottenborg asked if the library looks to the same percentage increase from the townships as they expect from the City.

"We as a Council have to look at our tax rate and try to provide services in such a way that still makes it attractive for new businesses and for existing businesses to stay in business," commented Mayor Runningen.

Motion by Peterson, seconded by Woessner to adopt the 2006 Budget as presented in the amount of $1,251,423.42 for the General Fund. Motion passed unanimously. Mayor Runningen and Council Members thanked Administrator Solga, Clerk-Treasurer Ehlert, other staff members and members of the Budget Committee for their work on this budget.

Motion by Waller, seconded by Peterson to adopt the levy for 2006 in the amount of $507,148.42 for the general fund and $94,860 for the special levy. Motion passed unanimously.

Administrator Solga reviewed the Experience Works Program. Motion by Gottenborg, seconded by Waller to authorize a contribution of $500 for Experience Works. Motion passed unanimously.

Mayor Runningen reviewed the requirements of the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency Permit for an agreement between the City and West Central Turkeys, Inc. Motion by Gottenborg, seconded by Waller to authorize the Mayor and Administrator to sign the Significant Industrial User (SIU) Agreement with West Central Turkeys, Inc. Motion passed unanimously.

Ehlert reported on license fees for cigarette and gaming licenses. She checked with other communities and the League of Minnesota Cities and recommended that fees for these licenses remain as they are. Ehlert also discussed changing the Plumber’s License to a Plumber’s Registration since the State of Minnesota sets out requirements for plumbers. Building Inspector Dave Neisen recommended this change. Council agreed.

Council discussed the Fire Department Facility and a committee representative. Motion by Waller, seconded by Gottenborg to sign the letter agreeing to the concept that a new Fire Hall is needed, the City of Pelican Rapids agrees to the 20 year agreement, and that Richard Peterson will be the City’s representative. Motion passed unanimously.

Motion by Gottenborg, seconded by Waller to approve the Airport Lighting Amendment with the Minnesota Department of Aeronautics. Motion passed unanimously.

The last meeting of the year will be 12-27-05 at 4:00 p.m.

Meeting adjourned at 7:55 p.m.

Glenys Ehlert, CMC
Clerk-Treasurer